

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Held in Washington, D. C. - September 17, 1952

3. SUMMARY ON GOVERNMENT AND ART: Mr. Luskey presented copies of the

The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1953, was held in its Office in the Interior Department Building on Wednesday, September 17, 1952. The following members were present:

Mr. Finley, Chairman,

Prof. Hudnut,

Prof. Belluschi,

Mr. deWeldon,

Mr. Peets, also

4. PRELIMINARY REPORT ON POTOMAC RIVER BRIDGES: Mr. Luskey

presented a photostat copy of an article recently published setting forth that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are sending Mr. Marion Luskey, Administrative Assistant, who served in the absence of the Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the Meet-

ing of the Commission of Fine Arts, held on July 2, 1952, were approved.

2. MEMORANDUM FROM THE SECRETARY: The Secretary sent the following

Memorandum to the Commission, which was read:

"I am very sorry indeed to have to miss this meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts. It is the first time this has happened in a period of thirty years. The terrible heat of the past summer got the best of me, and I spent most of the month of August in a hospital. My doctor, one of the best in the city, told me that I was a very sick man. It will possibly require another two weeks or so for me to regain my strength so as to be fit for duty.

"I hope at this meeting the Commission will agree in general or approve Professor Hudnut's draft of the Introduction, Part I, if it is ready.

"I sent the Summary Statements to the witnesses, about fifty, and have ordered corrected mimeographed copies of the 'Summary on Government and Art,' Part II, after going over all of the material very carefully. They will be ready about October 1, and a copy will be sent to each Member of the Commission. It could be approved at the October meeting of the Commission. Then at the November meeting the Commission could take up the Conclusion and Recommendations, Part III.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

H. P. Caemmerer.

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Mr. Marion Insney, Administrative Assistant, who served in the absence of the Secretary.

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With kindest regards,
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The Commission were sorry to hear of the illness of Mr. Caemmerer and asked the Chairman to convey their regrets to him.

3. SUMMARY ON GOVERNMENT AND ART: Mr. Luskey presented copies of the revised and corrected "Summary on Government and Art," which were received while the Commission was in session. The Commission decided to give the document a final review during the interim of the next meeting.

4. PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PROPOSED POTOMAC RIVER BRIDGES: Mr. Luskey presented a photostat copy (Exhibit A), of an article recently published setting forth that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are sending a report to Congress regarding several proposed bridges to cross the Potomac:

1. At E Street, N. W. to cross Theodore Roosevelt Island;
2. At Nebraska Avenue, near Chain Bridge;
3. At Shepherds Landing, near the north entrance to Alexandria;
or
4. At Jones Point in south Alexandria.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY STATED: You remember the discussion several months ago as to whether a bridge should start from E Street, Northwest, not far from the Lincoln Memorial and cross Theodore Roosevelt Island, connecting with the Lee Boulevard.

General Grant appeared at that meeting, as also Mr. Hermann Hagedorn, Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association, protesting against the erection of a bridge at that location, because it would destroy the bird sanctuary and the purposes of the Roosevelt Memorial.

MR. PEETS SAID, "There have been two studies of the bridge situation here. One group has favored building the E Street bridge first, but Harland Bartholomew, who is Consultant to the National Capital Planning Commission said that project should be held in abeyance; it may throw too much traffic into the city. He suggested that the Nebraska Avenue bridge would reduce the traffic into the city, and the Alexandria Bridge, at one location or the

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CHAIRMAN FINLEY ASKED, "Is there not some thought that if anything happened, say in the case of War, to the present bridges, it would be a good idea to have a bridge further down the river at some distance removed from the present ones, so as to assure some way of getting across the Potomac. Mr. Finley pointed out that it would be desirable to equip a new bridge near Alexandria with railroad tracks, since, in the event the Southern Railroad bridge in South Washington should become impassable, it would be necessary to route both passenger and freight trains by way of Harpers Ferry, which is 60 miles to the north of us; it would be a calamity to the National Capital if that were ever to happen. which would be dimension masonry up

PROFESSOR HUDNUT pointed out that the article states that the bridge proposed to cross Roosevelt Island would be 40 feet above the island-- imagine that skyline; a curved railing of which we have a design in detail.

The Commission decided to give further study to the projects proposed. It was recalled that at the meeting of the Commission, held on March 28, 1952,, the erection of a bridge at E Street to cross Theodore Roosevelt Island had been disapproved, Mr. Peets not voting. rubble stone and dimension granite?"

5. BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON PARKWAY BRIDGE: The office of National Capital Parks, National Park Service, represented by Messrs, Annese and Horne, submitted a preliminary design for a Baltimore-Washington Parkway bridge, to cross the Anacostia River. They were accompanied by Mr. Harold J. Spelman and Mr. Milton A. Fischer, of the Bureau of Public Roads. we are always more

Mr. Annese was asked to explain the design--first with reference to its location. He said, "The park alignment comes across the District line in this area (in Northwest Washington), just north of the railroad. It is going to go through Anacostia Park, the National Training School grounds, and New York Avenue extended. The bridge itself is over the Anacostia, at the point

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where the District line crosses the Anacostia River. It connects with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. The bridge would be a few hundred yards upstream of the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge. The bridge is on a curve of two degrees, the full extension of the parkway alignment, extending approximately from the northwest to the southwest. The District of Columbia boundary could actually cut through the corners of the abutments. and also a question of architecture. The bridge itself is to be a girder bridge with a reinforced concrete deck and sidewalk parapet overhanging the girders. The abutments and wing walls are to be of reinforced concrete, stone faced, with masonry coping. The piers are concrete and the ends of the concrete are to be in rubble type masonry, what we call Class A masonry, which would be dimension masonry up here (indicating) and the sides of the piers finished in plywood panels. The railing is a pipe railing similar to the bridge that we have in Rock Creek Park, I believe. It is a curved railing of which we have a design in detail. There would be two pavements, 36 feet wide, with a six-foot median and two four-foot sidewalks. There would really be no pedestrian traffic on this parkway. The sidewalks are put in for safety purposes."

Professor Belluschi asked, "Why the rubble stone and dimension granite?"

Mr. Annese replied, "To prevent scouring action of the water against the face of the piers. We do get considerable amount of scouring; so it does serve a practical purpose to face the ends of the piers with stone. Also, inasmuch as we are calling for a rounded pier, which would have less resistance to the flow of water, we find from experience that we are always more sure of our workmanship when we call for stone than if we were to call for concrete. In other words, we are assured of better workmanship in stone than if we were to have concrete. It is difficult to control concrete. The rubble stone would go down to the footings--"minus four." That enables one to see stone at low tide. I asked, "You think mortar would not be scoured away?"

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Professor Belluschi said, "But then the scouring usually occurs at the surface." Mr. Annese replied, "At high water, high tide line, and the low tide line."

Professor Belluschi then asked, "How much more expensive would it have to be to have all rubble stone on both sides?"

Mr. Annese replied, "It is a question of cost and also a question of architectural treatment. The architects thought you would like it this way rather than extending the masonry all the way through. It would double the cost easily for this part of the work, the finishing. In other words, our rubble masonry is running about \$150 a cubic yard, and architectural concrete would run about \$90 a cubic yard.

Mr. Peets asked, "What is the width or thickness of the piers." Mr. Annese replied, "The radius is three feet." Mr. Fischer said, "The nose is four inches wider; there is a two-inch reveal on either side of the nose. So the width of the nose is six feet four inches; of the concrete proper, six feet.

Professor Belluschi noted, "You have two breaks at the abutment. Are they necessary or is that done for an architectural purpose?"

Mr. Annese replied, "This represents the bulkhead on which the steel rests. It is to terminate the railing." Mr. Fischer said that the set-backs in the wing wall faces are not absolutely essential.

Professor Hudnut asked, "What happens behind the plywood? Is there any structure there? Mr. Annese replied, "It is a plywood form. The concrete and plywood is taken away afterwards. There is no treatment of it, no rubbing. We call it a high grade plywood."

Mr. Peets asked, "How deep is the surface of the stone?" Mr. Annese replied, "At least 12 inches at the nose. The construction makes it necessary to have at least 12 inches of stone."

Professor Belluschi asked, "You think mortar would not be scoured away?"

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Mr. Annese replied, "Perhaps it would; but that is readily patched."

Mr. Fischer added, "We increased the depth of the stone from 9 inches to 12 inches because of the recommendation of the stone people."

Mr. Peets asked, "You mentioned a radius a few moments ago. Was that the little protection of the corner or is there a rounded section?"

Mr. Annese asked, "On the other piers?" Mr. Peets, "Yes."

Mr. Annese: It is both for architectural effect and gives a pleasing form and the least resistance to the water, that is, the three foot radius. The sidewalk overhangs the girder.

Mr. Horne remarked, "The two-inch reveal is on a slight bias where the end of the stone work meets the architectural concrete. The thickness of the stone work is 6' 4" and the thickness of the architectural concrete is 6 feet, but the nosing of the stone work is half a circle."

Continuing, Mr. Annese said: "This is a section taken through the bridge showing the face of one of the piers. You notice it is elevated to take care of the two-degree curvature we have in the roadway. This is the type of railing I was referring to. It is similar to the grade separation bridges that we have at Porter Street and Klinge Road in Rock Creek Park. This represents stone masonry on the end of the piers. Here are our plywood panels (indicating). We reversed our plywood forms so as to get interesting patterns with the grain. We have the V-grooves to mark off our panels.

"Here is the treatment of the plan at the abutment (indicating), showing how our railing terminates in the wing wall. That is an elevation view of it. You notice that we have an overhang over the beam. The median right here where paving and granite blocks are to break up the expanse of the concrete and also to offer a contrast to the concrete and form a sort of practical point of view, also defines the median, and gives you a little different

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touch to make it easier for the driver when he drives across the bridge. We don't have stiffeners on the outside beams so that you will get a clear beam and it will give us a very clean architecture."

Professor Belluschi said: "That is very nice, but I wonder if it could not be continued instead of having so many breaks at the end. Do you see what I mean? Instead of having one or two breaks there--I suppose this is necessary but this could be continued and it does not make that break. Could that be studied, just as a question? It looks a little fuzzy."

Mr. Annese replied, "A number of studies were made and this one was finally selected by the architect. Just why he selected that one of his studies none of us can quite answer." Mr. Horne said, the architect is in Europe now studying bell towers for the carillon that the Dutch Queen gave to the United States a few months ago.

Mr. Fischer added, "I might mention that at that point of carrying the railing at the parapet and the railing further than the end of the girders, that is identical to what you have on that Porter Street Bridge. I did understand that the architect did study that bridge and he might have based it on that. The point about those stiffeners, there are stiffeners at the bearings on the outside facing."

Professor Hudnut said: "I would like to make one comment. I think that there is a very unhappy relation between the rubble and the concrete facing. You have two different technologies, two different types of construction there, two different ways of working. One is poured and the other an applique of hand-cut stone. That is, you have a masonry process and you apply a handicraft process. The two are going to quarrel like a couple of in-laws. There is absolutely no harmony in them, or scale or tension or feeling or character. If in some way you could modify the one or the other, either one might be all right. You could carry and work it out all the way through. You would have

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Professor Hubert said: "I would like to make one comment. I think that there is a very unhappy relation between the rubble and the concrete facing. You have two different technologies, two different types of construction there, hand-cut stone. That is, you have a masonry process and you apply a hand-cast process. The two are going to quarrel like a couple of in-laws. There is absolutely no harmony in them, or scale or tension or feeling or character. If in some way you could modify the one or the other, either one might be all right. You could carry and work it out all the way through. You would have

consistency in the pier, although it would be out of harmony with the bridge. I would suggest that we take the scale of that plywood and carry it around the ends with a facing of granite or limestone in the place of the handwork. Would that cost much?"

Mr. Annese: That would require dimension masonry.

Prof. Hudnut: Would that cost so much more?

Mr. Annese: Three times as much for the dimension masonry.

Professor Hudnut: Not three times for the bridge. Would that be an important item in the cost of the bridge as a whole?

Mr. Spelman: Let me see if I understand that. He suggested dimension masonry or large masonry in those pier ends rather than rubble.

Mr. Annese: Yes.

Professor Hudnut: Something that is strong and masculine and practical in character of the bridge itself. You are putting in there a pretification, something rustic and hand-made and sweet and that is precisely what the bridge in my mind should not have.

Mr. Spelman: How many of those piers are there? We can make a rough computation of that. If there are only three piers,--

Professor Hudnut: And the ends.

Mr. Spelman: The height of it would be about twenty feet.

Professor Belluschi: To be consistent, the pier has to be one thing or another. If you use stone, I think the stone is subject to erosion just as much as good concrete. I think if there is a question of cost it should be all concrete. If it is not a question of cost, it should be all stone or all rubble stone--fairly masculine.

Professor Hudnut: I could rationalize the stone on the ends by saying that that is where the erosion takes place.

Professor Belluschi: "The stone will be eroded just as much as the concrete, especially limestone.

Professor Hudnut: Granite.

Mr. Spelman: I think it should be granite in that water.

Professor Belluschi: You would have granite only on the nose?

Professor Hudnut: Granite nose. You see, that is a structural principle; that is, resistance to erosion.

Professor Belluschi: Not veneer? Then it would be solid?

Professor Hudnut: Applique of graphite, putting reinforcement on the elbow of your coat to resist wear, you see? The whole thing is an engineering device from start to finish and not a magnificent line plus a few touches of handicraft on the pier as you have now. You don't mind my speaking so bluntly, do you?

Mr. Annese: Of course not.

Mr. Peets asked, Did he say that the applique would go on the wing walls? Professor Hudnut replied, "Yes."

Mr. Peets: All of the stone works to be changed.

Professor Hudnut: Do you agree with that?

Chairman Finley: "I quite agree with that. I particularly do not like the rubble in the piers supporting in the water.

Professor Belluschi: I think it can be given form by treating them separately. Rather than having a continuation, you have a two-inch reveal there.

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I would suggest that we take the scale of that plywood and carry it around

although it would be out of harmony with the bridge.

There is not really enough, but having them in granite it gives shape.

Professor Hudnut: There could be a change in scale there because you are changing the material. You could have a smaller unit than you have in the plywood surface.

Mr. Annese asked, "Would you keep the Class A masonry in the wing wall?"

Professor Hudnut replied, "No. If I had my way; if the cost was not excessive---

Mr. Spelman: "The cost would be excessive to attempt to build the entire structure of dimension masonry. We went into that in considerable detail at the time the Pentagon bridges were built and the treatment there was the dimension masonry or the granite pier facing and the corners of the abutments. The mass was of rubble. It ran into a considerable sum of money, that difference."

Professor Hudnut remarked, "Of course, I know it costs more but I thought perhaps in proportion to the whole bridge, not in proportion to the pier, but in proportion to the whole bridge it might not be an important item.

Mr. Annese said, "I think it would increase the total cost of the bridge by at least ten to fifteen per cent.

Professor Hudnut: "How about having concrete to the wing wall, picking up the same plywood treatment but granite on the piers and on the return of the piers? That would give you a rhythm, repetition of materials all the way through the bridge--only two materials instead of three.

Mr. Peets: "This problem could be handled and discussed in a general sense, because there are hundreds of bridges, as we all know, in and around the city. A very popular way of constructing a boulevard and parkway bridge is to veneer it with granite, if funds permit, some kind of a hard stone. Personally, I have never been happy about it and always felt very conscious of the fact that it is only eight inches thick or whatever it might be. Yet

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There could be a change in the material. You could have a smaller unit than you have in the plywood surface.

Mr. Inness asked, "Could you keep the glass a masonry in the wing walls?" Professor Hubert replied, "No. If I had my way, if the cost was not

Mr. Spelman: "The cost would be excessive to attempt to build the en-

the structure of b

the dimension masonry on the granite when facing and the corners of the abut-
ments. The mass was of rubble. It ran into a considerable sum of money, that
difference."

perhaps in proportion to the whole bridge, not in proportion to the pier, but
in proportion to the whole bridge it might not be an important item.

Mr. Inness said, "I think it would increase the total cost of the bridge

by at least ten to fifteen per cent.

Professor Hubert: "Now about having concrete to the wing walls, placing

up the same plywood treatment but granite on the pier and on the return of
the pier? That would give you a rhythm, repetition of materials all the way
through the bridge—only two materials instead of three.

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Personally, I have never been happy about it and always felt very conscious
of the fact that it is only eight inches thick or whatever it might be. For

it is not handled like a veneer; it is handled like a true masonry heavy construction. I have often wondered whether a pre-cast concrete block might not be able to make that harder than the ordinary large cast forms and give the blocks a better surface, and put them together in such a way that the cracks would follow the joints instead of running right across the face of it, which it very often does in the case of concrete construction--something of that sort. It is a very common problem.

Professor Belluschi: But I would like to know--"I am sure there are hundreds of bridges with concrete piers and the amount of erosion that occurs is not very great, especially if they use good mixture, good hard mixtures which I am sure they can use. I would much prefer, since I think the cost is an important question, to see the whole thing in concrete and eliminate all rubble stone and anything else, provided that there was an assurance that the concrete will not be eroded. I doubt whether the matter of erosion by the water is a very important factor. If the shape is proper and it does not have to be round, if there was not a section of a parabolic curve or even more pointed, that the erosion so far as the pier is concerned would be very small and certainly not enough to hurt--but that is something that should be checked. I am sure there are lots of bridges where the concrete goes in the water and nothing happens.

Mr. Peets: "It is not the water erosion that is the critical point because the same type of construction is used in going over a highway, and the water is not the essential thing. The essential thing is the landscaping. I mean if in the first place stone is used in order to get something more harmonious with the parkway, that is important. Stone is very commonly used for parkway bridges, and say what you will, in ordinary construction of a wing wall like that ultimately it cracks and water comes through.

Professor Belluschi: Not those monolithic. I don't think they will

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crack, particularly, and that holds true of the side there. I think we ought to be clear now whether we are talking about erosion. If that is a question, then we should face it. If it is not a question, we should face it from the aesthetic point of view. And if rubble stone should go there, it should be all rubble stone even if it costs a little more. I agree with what Dean Hudnut said, that this is bastardization of that. You have one thing and another put together. One would like to make it look pretty but didn't succeed. If you want to prettify and want to be in harmony with nature and all the other rocks, that is another thing and then perhaps we should face the whole thing that way; there should be a consistency there which I do not think it has now.

Mr. Horne: "If I might make a slight remark on the problem of erosion-- Here in the District of Columbia we have part of an old Aqueduct Bridge, which is a stone bridge. The piers still remain, if you may recall. They stick several feet out of the water. This was built some 120 years ago. And right downstream is the newer Key Bridge, which is a concrete bridge. They tell me that has some six inches or more of erosion and the District Bridge Department is quite concerned at this time because of the reinforcing steel in the pier being exposed and beginning to disintegrate. It was built about 1920.

Mr. Spelman: "The action is probably not well described by the term erosion. There is an action that takes place in that tidal area that is more than erosion. It is apparently some sort of action that the salt and briny water has on the concrete--brackish tidal water. The effect seems to be greater on the points than on the sides of the pier. I recall some twenty years ago we designed a bridge on the Colonial Parkway across some of the brackish arms of the York River and while it was a concrete bridge, we put a little granite screen around the piers between high and low tide, about four feet high; concrete below and concrete above. It serves as a granite screen in that area of tidal movement where the worst action takes place.

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most what the worst action takes place.

Professor Belluschi suggested, "Would it not be logical to have a strip as high as high and as low as low tide permit, and to have it go all around would speedily explain itself; to have granite instead of rubble stone which can be repaired. Then if there was a strip all around, to me would make quite a bit of sense. If erosion occurs, it is the erosion of the element of salt in the water that should be taken care of, but it could be taken care of a little better if it was all around.

Mr. Spelman: "We have a further structural reason for facing concrete with stone, and that is that the purely concrete surfaces, after a period of years, begin to look pretty tough and they do begin to disintegrate. Where the stone-faced structures, where exposed faces of concrete are covered with stone, they retain their condition for many years without repair work or without treatment of any kind, so that there is an engineering reason as well as an architectural reason for stone-faced concrete. The concrete that is underneath is covered and does not seem to be attacked that way. Concrete seems to act somewhat like wood. We say that wood is all right if it is wholly dry or it is all right if it is wholly wet; but when it is both wet and dry, it soon disintegrates. So that factor enters into this kind of a design, too."

Professor Belluschi: You can say that concrete under the bridge would be protected by sun and rain and that would keep it.

Mr. Spelman: That is true from the tidal level. I think you can see that quite regularly, particularly in these structures that serve as overpasses and underpasses on highways.

Professor Belluschi: No question that the surface material is always more attractive and where it wears better, but we are talking about saving money but not being able to use rubble stone throughout and then the consistency came out and where you have concrete right to the water as well as exposed to the water and the elements, so why not cover that as well?

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lain itself; to have granite instead of rubble stone which

Mr. Spelman: I think it would be a good thing to do.

Mr. Fischer remarked, I would like to mention that I believe what is shown here is the existing river channel and this line here indicates the center line of the future proposed channel which the Corps of Engineers are working on. So we have lined up our piers with the center line of the proposed channel.

Mr. Spelman: "The points of the piers, Mr. Horne, are attacked by other things like that coming down the stream. If they are kept off the point and slide along the side, there is a further action, particularly on the upper part of the pier. Ice forms, and it always seems to be worse on the points than on the sides. That is where the action takes place, the sliding on the side."

Chairman Finley then asked, "Are there any other questions that anyone would like to ask? There were none, and after the gentlemen left the meeting, the Commission discussed the design for this bridge in Executive Session. A copy of their discussion is attached hereto and is made a part of these Minutes (Exhibit B).

During that discussion, Mr. Horne returned briefly to the Commission Room and submitted figures regarding the stone work. Mr. Horne said:

"We have done some rough figuring on the matter of the stone work. The estimated cost of the bridge, designed as you see it, is \$1,400,000. We estimate the changing of the rubble masonry to dimension masonry, as shown on the sketch, will be \$80,000. To change rubble masonry and the concrete, architectural concrete to dimension masonry will be approximately \$380,000. To change the architectural concrete to rubble, as now on the "peri" ends, \$150,000. Mr. Spelman told me that he has between \$30,000 and \$40,000 available in addition to the \$1,400,000 estimated cost at the present time.

"The other point that Mr. Spelman pointed out to me is that this particular structure is the critical item for the opening of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, that it will take about a year and a half to build, and that the other items of the parkway are either far enough along or will take a lesser amount of time, so that this is the item on which the date of the opening of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway will depend. He also reminded me that in essence he is finished with the drawing now and he could on this basis, a year and a

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half, could start in a matter of months from now.

Professor Hudnut: The suggestion we made would actually reduce the cost of the bridge, then, would it not?

Chairman Finley: Using concrete.

Professor Hudnut: Just the strip of granite around the water's edge.

In a report sent to the Office of National Capital Parks, the Commission requested (Exhibit C) that a new study be prepared, embodying these points:

1. That no ashlar (or so-called rubble) facing wall be used;
2. That dimension granite, laid in courses, be used where protection against erosion or other damage by river water is necessary, presumably up to the high tide line. This applies to the sides as well as ends of the piers, also to the wing walls where they are exposed to erosion;
3. That all other surfaces of piers and wing walls be the normal surface of the cast concrete;
4. That the surfaces of the piers, above the granite, shall not receive any special treatment such as accenting the plywood joints of the forms;
5. That the vertical breaks in the wing walls be restricted to those points where expansion joints occur and that they be reduced to the minimum necessary for the satisfactory hiding of the joints;
6. That the concrete sidewalks, with their pipe railings, be carried through, at both ends, over the wing walls to the blocks which mark the termini of the bridge;
7. That consideration be given to bringing the tops of all piers to a level line, using blocks of varying (that is graded) heights to support the steel beams.

In considering these items, the Commission took into consideration the importance of the time element and the cost factors in relation to this bridge.

6. SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT SUBMISSIONS: The Commission considered the following submissions by the Director of Inspection (Building Inspector) of the District of Columbia:

- (a) Erect one-story building at 701-4th Street, N. W.
(Case No. 1513, submitted August 29, 1952)
Held for corrected drawings.
- (b) Alterations to building at 2216 Virginia Avenue, N. W.
(Case No. 1514, submitted September 4, 1952)
Approved.
- (c) Alterations to building at 2325 Virginia Avenue, N. W.
(Case No. 1515, submitted September 4, 1952)
Approved.

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Professor Hubert: The suggestion we made would actually reduce the cost

It is a very good suggestion.

Professor Hubert: Just the strip of granite around the water's edge.

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3. That all other surfaces of piers and wing walls be the normal surface of the cast concrete;
4. That the concrete be finished with a smooth surface, and receive any special treatment such as accentuating the plywood joints of the forms;
5. That the vertical breaks in the wing walls be restricted to those points where expansion joints occur and that they be reduced to the minimum necessary for the satisfactory hiding of the joints;
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- (c) Alterations to building at 2325 Virginia Avenue, N. W. (Case No. 1515, submitted September 4, 1952) Approved.

- (d) Erect new Apartments at 8210-16-20 West Beach Drive, N. W.
(Case No. 1516, submitted September 10, 1952)
Approved provided brick is used in place of Ohio Stone.
- (e) Erect sign at 501 Second Street, N. E.
(Case No. 1517, submitted September 11, 1952)
Approved provided sign is no larger than indicated.
- (f) Erect two signs at 601 - 15th Street, N. W.
(Case No. 1518, submitted September 11, 1952)
Approved provided: 1. Signs to be set as low as awning rods permit; 2. Sign on Fifteenth Street front to be set approximately two feet from corner.
- (g) Repaint existing signs at 600 Indiana Avenue, N. W.
(Case No. 1519, submitted September 16, 1952)
Approved provided new signs do not extend beyond limits of present signs.

7. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The Commission decided to hold their next meeting in Washington on Wednesday, October 22, 1952.

The Commission adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

(d) The Board of Directors of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Inc. (AT&T) has approved the proposed changes to the AT&T System of Accounting for the year ending December 31, 1952.

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How Three Proposed Bridges Would Serve Area Traffic

The engineering report prepared for the District Commissioners gives details of what the three recommended bridges would do to ease the traffic situation in the District area.

A summation of the report's analysis of each proposed span follows:

E Street Bridge.

The E Street Bridge would connect E street and New Hampshire Avenue N.W., and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, on the District side of the river, with the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington boulevard, Wilson boulevard and U. S. Route 1, on the Virginia side.

Studies show that 82 per cent of the traffic would use Highway Memorial, Key and E Street bridges and cannot be diverted to outlying bridges. The remaining 18 per cent of the traffic could use Chain, the proposed Alexandria and Nebraska Avenue bridges.

Six Lanes.

The function of the E street bridge would be to increase the capacity of the central bridge. It would provide the greatest convenience for users and the most useful peak-hour capacity. It would provide the most convenient crossing for 48,500 vehicles a day wishing to cross the Potomac River.

The bridge would have six lanes. The bridge would leave a clearance of 63 feet for vessels, eliminating the need for a draw. The water would pass over Roosevelt Island at a height of 40 feet. The bridge itself would cost \$10,000. But acquiring right-of-way for the approaches, the construction of the approaches, engineering and administrative costs would run the total cost of the project up to \$22,310,000. The project would take 3 1/4 years to complete.

ALEXANDRIA BRIDGE

Shepherd's Landing

The bridge at Shepherd's Landing would connect, on the District side, with the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the proposed Anacostia-Kenilworth Freeway at Overlook Avenue and Chesapeake street S.W. On the Virginia side, it would connect Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway and Route 1 and would lead through Alexandria to a direct connection with Shirley highway.

The traffic would be drawn almost entirely from the Highway Memorial, relieving it of 15,206 vehicles on an average day. Through

traffic could by-pass the downtown area.

The bridge would be four lanes, with a swing span in the middle to allow ships to pass. The swing span above the channel would be 50 feet from the water, allowing most vessels to pass without opening the bridge.

The bridge itself would cost \$7,993,000. The cost of building the approaches, etc., would run the project up to \$21,484,000. It would take 4 1/2 years to complete.

Jones Point.

A bridge at Jones Point would avoid the physical obstructions and developed areas to be encountered if the span were placed at Shepherd's Landing. It would be cheaper to build and would serve the same purpose. It would be essentially the same type of bridge.

A Jones Point bridge also would connect with the proposed Anacostia-Kenilworth Freeway at Chesapeake street and Overlook Avenue.

On the Virginia side, the approaches would pass through the southern part of Alexandria and extend to Shirley highway, with interchanges at Mount Vernon Memorial highway, the U. S. Route 1 and Telegraph road.

The Jones Point bridge approaches on the Virginia side would go through relatively undeveloped land. The total project, to take four years, would cost \$19,898,000.

NEBRASKA AVENUE BRIDGE.

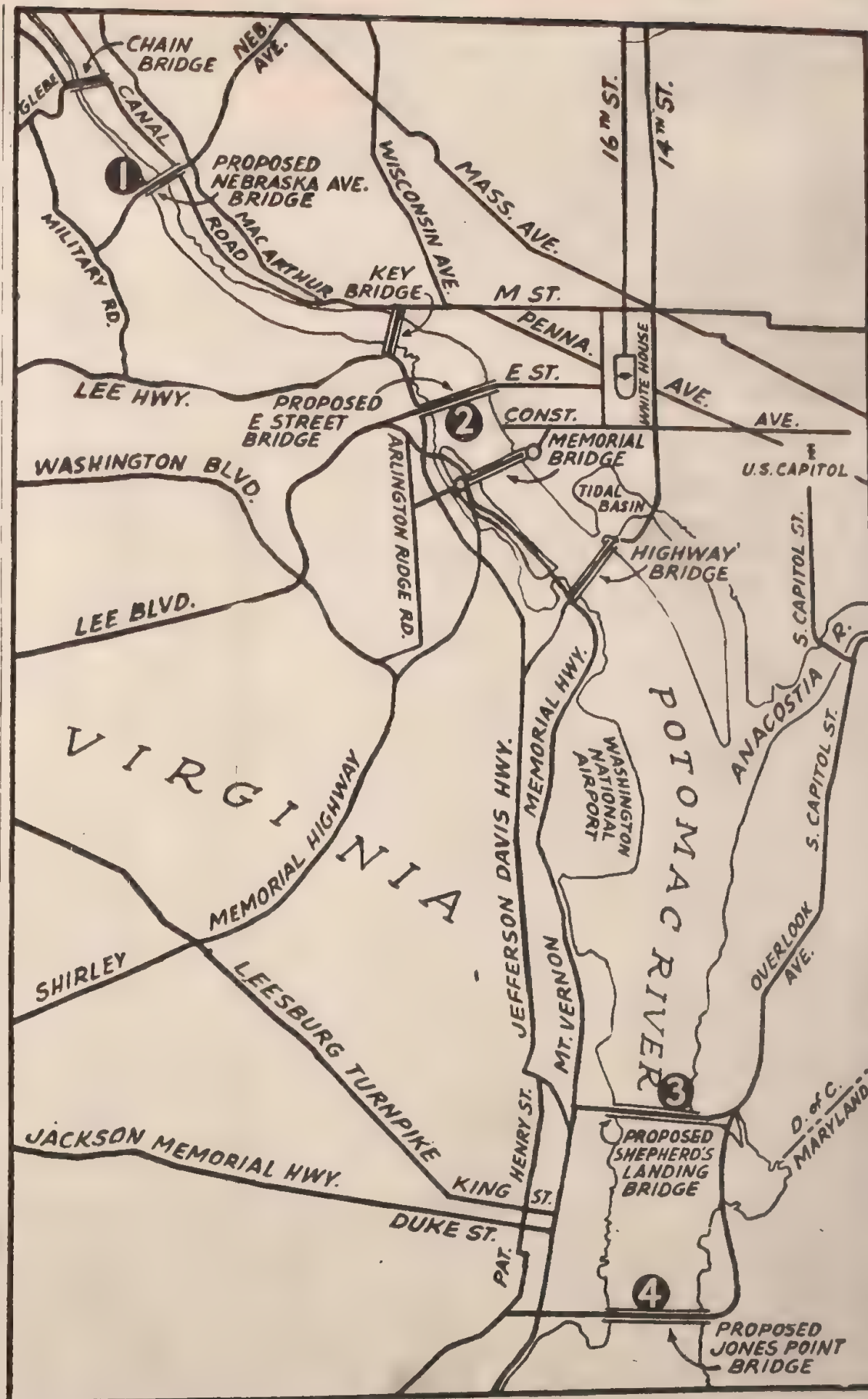
This bridge would connect an extension of Nebraska Avenue N. W. with a planned network of highways on the Virginia side. Two additional connections on the District side also would be needed. These are the extension of the Whitehaven parkway, from MacArthur boulevard to Massachusetts Avenue, and a connection between Canal road and Nebraska Avenue.

The bridge would make available a west side by-pass, connecting U. S. Route 240 on the District side with U. S. Routes 29, 211 and 50 on the Virginia side.

This bridge would be a four-span steel arch bridge, with four traffic lanes. Located above the navigable part of the river, it would require no special clearances.

The main structure would cost \$4,925,000, while approaches, etc., would raise the cost of the entire project to \$8,573,000. It would take three years to complete.

The bridge would do little to relieve the peak-hour traffic in the central section.



SITES OF NEW POTOMAC BRIDGES—Recommendations that three new bridges be constructed across the Potomac River involved these sites: (1) proposed Nebraska avenue bridge, (2) proposed E street bridge, (3) Shepherd's Landing site for proposed Alexandria bridge and (4) Jones Point site for proposed Alexandria bridge.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN FOR BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON PARKWAY BRIDGE

Criticisms and Suggestions by The Commission of Fine Arts
in Executive Session

September 17, 1952

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: What shall we recommend?

MR. HUDNUT: It is a wonderful piece of engineering architecture.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I do think it is a very mixed-looking job.

MR. HUDNUT: A beautiful line across there; marvelous. And wants to doll it up.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I object to two things. I object to the mixture. It should be one thing or another. I do not object to the rubble stone if it is properly done and carried right through, not too jumpy like that. I would eliminate that and carry it through.

MR. HUDNUT: I object to all rubble stone on engineering works.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I agree. In a park where you have a rustic setting --

MR. HUDNUT: Little bridge. But this is an 82-foot span, 82-feet between the piers and that is heroic; that is not park.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Monumental scale and should not use rubble at all.

MR. PEETS: Especially when this is an arch. There are places on the other side of the Potomac Parkway that have ~~been~~ arches. The arches and everything are thin. You walk underneath it and see all the concrete, the ribs. There is one place where the Potomac runs under the driveway and there is a bridge over it over near the Pentagon and there has been a settlement, a spreading out of the foundations on both sides, and construction is such that the keystone, which is in rubble, in granite, the keystone and there are about three feet of arch on both sides of the key stone, are suspended and held up by concrete construction in general of the bridge. It always looks so soft to me, so feminine -- but it is a universal problem in every city in

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the country, that is, building bridges like that and putting in that kind of stone. The Park Service has been one of the big advocates of it. Yet Mr. Spelman said something about the loss of appearance in laying concrete and I agree; old concrete bridges, among them railroad bridges are absolutely ugly; but it seems to me possible that by using concrete in blocks where you could control the surface better, you get a more durable and handsomer surface, also by the block unit structure of the wall avoiding the cracks and the threads which you often get from concrete. That may be a solution.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Concrete is affected by the salt water.

MR. HUDNUT: You are talking about the wing.

MR. PEETS: I would just as soon see concrete. The thing I would like there would be to have all of those piers, the lower part of them built out of granite, come up six inches above the high water line and nothing of granite or of any other stone to be above that point. Everything that is touched by the tidal water would be granite; nothing that is not touched.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Not this (indicating)?

MR. PEETS: Not the nose of it. There is no big current here.

MR. BELLUSCHI: The rest concrete.

MR. PEETS: So that it shows up on the land work there, too.

MR. HUDNUT: Everything else concrete block.

MR. BELLUSCHI: You can give a nice shape rather than just rounding the material like this, so that if that is in the plan, it makes much more sense.

MR. PEETS: The bridge goes across like that.

MR. BELLUSCHI: It makes more sense to have granite follow around this line, or whatever line is at high tide, all of it.

MR. PEETS: That is what we are describing.

MR. HUDNUT: That is what I have in mind. Do you gain very much by

having that from an engineering standpoint?

MR. BELLUSCHI: It is very expensive to round out every piece here. I do not think they want to have it solid.

MR. PEETS: That is only eight feet there.

MR. HUDNUT: The round form is so much stronger.

MR. PEETS: Fits better than the canted.

MR. BELLUSCHI: That does not matter, but it makes more sense to go around in granite, to have a belt to protect against.

MR. HUDNUT: I agree with what Elbert says; I think it should be granite wherever the water impinges on the bridge; elsewhere, concrete.

MR. PEETS: I agree perfectly with Spelman. I know a lot of people who do believe that concrete simply does not stand up esthetically.

MR. BELLUSCHI: It doesn't, but then --

MR. PEETS: The ordinary poured concrete poured into forms --

MR. HUDNUT: You are talking about blocks, are you not?

MR. PEETS: What I am advocating is blocks but that will require some education and explanation and argument before you can get these chaps to do it.

MR. HUDNUT: That is what we are here for, to educate them.

MR. PEETS: What size blocks have we in mind?

MR. HUDNUT: Big ones.

MR. PEETS: With the courses two feet.

MR. HUDNUT: Two feet if possible.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I don't get it; I just don't understand it. I am sorry I don't because here you go, you precast them. You have the same material, concrete, both, which has the same objection, soil erosion and weather. The only thing you might eliminate is the cracking.

MR. PEETS: The difference between concrete blocks and large masses of poured reinforced concrete --

CHAPTER I. OF THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

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MR. BELLUSCHI: Which technically they do with a vibrator and good colored sand and a good cement.

MR. HUDNUT: And no cracks.

MR. BELLUSCHI: On that side there would be no cracks. You look for cracks in dams where you have tremendous amounts of aggregate. It is only on thin walls that you find cracks.

MR. PEETS: I do not know any examples of it.

MR. BELLUSCHI: You have a structure and you put a veneer of concrete of the same material -- I just don't --

MR. PEETS: But the structure part of it is designed for a specialized purpose, namely, to make an enormous amount, an enormous mass of quite strong and coherent material at the end of the bridge where the bridge pushes, and way down -- it can do its job perfectly well if it gets very dirty and takes on a disagreeable color and it does just as well if there are a few surface cracks or ugly expansion joints. Even this will have to have expansion joints and bleeding and fluorescing and so on. All those things do not interfere with the essential objects of that mass of concrete, but the business of protecting the surface and giving a desirable scale of the surface and better appearance, that is better done with construction divided into small blocks which adjust themselves to settlement better than to expansion and contraction and changes and so forth, better than a big mass. There is a differentiation. The general mass has one purpose of construction; the surface has a special duty to perform and it should be designed and built different for that purpose.

MR. BELLUSCHI: It will be concrete still, the same material, it will still show the dirt and introduce a secondary element of hand craftsmanship, veneering of the same material. To me it just does not make sense. I am sorry but I just do not see it.

MR. PEETS: I have seen cinder concrete. You see houses, stables,

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garages, and so forth, built out of ordinary concrete blocks made of gravel, and that can be a very nice masonry surface. It can stand up for years and still be quite satisfactory. The same size construction in reinforced concrete would be simply disagreeable.

MR. HUDNUT: I would like to make one more suggestion. That is, the line of the concrete sidewalk should be carried way through to the termination of the bridge, not stopped against the wing walls. I think that would be a very substantial improvement.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I think so, and eliminate the break there. I think that can be done without any objection.

MR. HUDNUT: Two pylons, what do you call them, at the end there -- the Roman word is -- you know, would receive the railing.

MR. PEETS: That is right.

MR. BELLUSCHI: The only reason they gave on that is that it was done at another bridge.

MR. HUDNUT: It looked good.

MR. PEETS: Probably designed by the then-chairman of the National Commission of Fine Arts.

MR. HUDNUT: If you had to choose between rubble and concrete block, would you take the rubble? You cannot have granite because it is too expensive.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Granite along here?

MR. HUDNUT: I mean on the wings.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Here I would have concrete, well cast, well colored and --

MR. PEETS: Colored?

MR. BELLUSCHI: If they use that golden sand and a certain kind of cement -- it is not white and has a very natural color, and if you are careful to have good forms, then you can do things with it which are just

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as good as anything. You remember going up to Maine on that freeway, those bridges. Some are very nice. They are all concrete and have a nice surface and I admit that they will get dirty and so on but so would the other block. I hate to see that imitation here, that veneer; here is a beautification which would be a veneer over concrete. You can do the concrete with very little more and show the substantial nature, the structural quality of the supports and let it go at that, rather than put in a lot of things for the sake of beauty.

Every time there is a practical element such as erosion by water, I will go for whatever is best, but when it comes to putting rubble stone, I would say that if it is done it would be a compromise and I would not like to see it too much but if it is concentrated, consistent, and done well, it is a surface and there the stone itself is a natural variation but concrete is not a natural variation, concrete blocks.

MR. PEETS: We used to call it random ashlar there; random ashlar is a very excellent material for the Pennsylvania Dutch cow barn; it has just the expression of leisurely construction by human beings with their hands and the moderate load involved and so forth. You can see both sides of the wall. That expression is just what you don't want in a case like this. So I am absolutely against this sort of mushy treatment of the surface. The two-foot clean edged concrete wall, I mean, with concrete block wall, it would not look like a barn. It would look thick. I don't care whether it looks thick or not. I don't especially care. I would not put it in three-foot squares with the corners coming together, four-foot, whatever they are. But say you had a two-foot broken joint facing. That is the comparison.

MR. HUDNUT: May I try to sum up the discussion?

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Would you please?

MR. HUDNUT: The Commission requests the architect to submit a new study

in which, first, no ashlar facing will be used.

Second, granite shall be used for proper protection against erosion and other wear at the surface of the water. Three, all other surfaces of piers and wing walls to be either concrete, cast, or a veneer of concrete blocks. Four, the concrete support for the sidewalks to be carried through at both ends over the wing walls to the blocks which form the termini of the bridge, period.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I think that sums up my views. Does everyone agree with that:

MR. BELLUSCHI: Now, if you say concrete and we have no control over what kind of concrete blocks —

MR. HUDNUT: To submit a study.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Resubmit a study. But then if they come in with concrete blocks all prettied up and then we get something else on it, I can visualize it would be very ugly.

MR. HUDNUT: Do you object to my trying to meet both your views?

MR. BELLUSCHI: If we go along with that we are committed to one and since it is a majority, fine; I will have to be the minority. I think it logical or advisable to have concrete blocks.

MR. HUDNUT: Suppose we cut that out and use concrete surface and submit something for us to review again.

MR. PEETS: You would probably get pebbles, something of the sort. That is what they think a surface is.

Block or other surface treatment.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Terrazzo blocks.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: It seems to me a pity where they are having an important bridge where they expect it to last a long time they cannot do it in granite or something like that.

MR. BELLUSCHI: My first reaction if I saw a bridge of that kind, dividing blocks, I would say: Is that imitation, is that in a form? If it is, it is very bad. If it is not imitation, what is it, a veneer, a veneer of the same material? Why cover up the same structure with the material that is not any better intrinsically, essentially, than the structure; that would be my question.

MR. PEETS: Do you think these people can deal with that, do you think they did well to put the molding in that which accentuates the joints in the four by four?

MR. BELLUSCHI: I think they are terrible, myself. But if there is a reason they want to use ply wood, this makes a fine surface and if they have joints and can run it up and down and so on -- but I am afraid that they are going to make a special point to make a mark or to imitate stone. That is typical engineering architecture.

MR. PEETS: Worse than that, they imitate wood. If they put the grains vertical in one place and horizontal in another which of course is so silly --

MR. DEWELDON: I find the little steps disturbing. It looks as if the bridge is already settled. With a clean line of steel beam across, then you have these little steps.

MR. BELLUSCHI: The bridge has an elevation.

MR. HUDNUT: I rather like the air between the bridge --

MR. DEWELDON: Yes, the air. These little steps.

MR. HUDNUT: I think that will be explained when you see the curve of the bridge when it is actually built. Here it looks as if it was straight but that will be explained psychologically-visually by the curve of the bridge.

MR. BELLUSCHI: What he says is that if this came straight at the load and just vary the height of these, you have a level support with a bridge.

MR. DEWELDON: The way it looks now, it looks as if the column settled.

MR. PEETS: Yes, you can put a varying block at each point underneath the beam.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Yes; then it gives you a feeling that the bridge is not very active.

MR. HUDNUT: Vitality and tension there that will be very effective.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Do you think the hand rail of pipe is adequate?

MR. HUDNUT: It does not make any difference.

MR. PEETS: The less the better.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Important to look through and be able to see the water. I never thought of pipe as a very handsome railing.

MR. PEETS: It gives the smallest amount of interruption of the view along with the bridge and the amount of strength.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Are we all in agreement with the statement?

MR. HUDNUT: I am sure Mr. Belluschi wants to propose an amendment.

MR. BELLUSCHI: I do not wish to seem to appear to disagree. Actually, it isn't. If we had control at the last moment to see what kind of texture we get, either on concrete blocks, we probably would be very close; but just theoretically and philosophically I object to concrete blocks and I would like to amend that we say simply concrete surface and see what they come back with.

MR. PEETS: I am in an exploratory point of attitude. I can see that landscape treatment of those bridges all over the country and don't like them. I am looking for something better and it may be possible under the very best conditions to build a decent piece of concrete work, but usually not.

MR. BELLUSCHI: They have a means of pouring today, first of all having high-grade cement and have a means of vibrating it and a means of preventing cracks and a means of giving natural integral color so that it will not be dark, cold, gray concrete. Concrete, it is true, does not age well like stone or other material, but that I don't think you can do very much about and I

thing will apply to the blocks as much as to the form. But I think they can do a good job if they want to.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Do you want to let the statement stand, then? Do you wish to take out concrete blocks and leave the word, concrete, or say "either-or."

MR. HUDNUT: That is what I said, "either-or." I think both. I don't feel quite as strongly as you do about the blocks. I would like it better as you describe it in your eloquent terms of a beautiful color -- but I have never seen that kind of concrete.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I have never fallen in love with concrete myself.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Have you seen that deep, golden cast, beautiful color? I have seen it around here, I think, unless it was in Boston somewhere. But I know that if they want to they can get the most beautiful golden sand.

MR. HUDNUT: If you put it into verse it might be more effective.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Your description of concrete reminds me of something.

Off the record. (Discussion off the record)

MR. BELLUSCHI: But this is monolithic and that is a support and that is what concrete does best. I think there is nothing bad to show it.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I am sorry that in Washington, building these monumental structures, bridges and buildings that we should be obliged to go to concrete at all where granite should be used.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Granite would be wonderful.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: In the case of the addition to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, you remember there is a little concrete surface building that is added on to the end, I think either of a limestone building or something, they did it to save a little money at the time. I remember Mr. Mellon was then Secretary of the Treasury and this came under the Supervising Architect. He said that it is far better not to build a building this year if you can't

afford to build a proper building. Put it over until next year or the year after because the other would be an eye-sore in that very important location fronting the river there.

It is quite true. You put up a building, a second-rate building or a second-rate bridge and it stays as an eye-sore for such a long time. I do think that is a very short-sighted policy in a city like Washington. We all agree with that with the exception that we are building for democracy now and if we wait for the time when we have money to build in the same manner and with the same financial ability that we had before, we won't build any more. It is a new and different kind of society. We have never had so much money and been so lavish with it, so wasteful, in the history of the country. The point is we take our standards from the ignorant man instead of from the man who knows.

MR. BELLUSCHI: Couldn't afford to put rubble stone which is the cheapest thing next to concrete because they could not get an appropriation. You can't say that is very bad, and sometimes it is a fact and we may as well recognize it.

MR. deWEILDON: In Florence, they built the bridges very well. They have less money than we have. Recently they rebuilt a 16th century bridge.

6. That the concrete sidewalks, with their pipe railings, be carried through, at both ends, over the wing walls to the blocks which mark the termini of the bridge.

7. That consideration be given to bringing the tops of all piers to a level line, using blocks of varying (that is, graded) heights to support the steel beams.

The Commission are aware of the importance of the time and cost factors in relation to this bridge. If any of our suggestions seem to you to present any special difficulties, as regards your schedule or for other reasons, please give us an opportunity to discuss them with you.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Harry T. Thompson, Associate Superintendent,
National Capital Parks, National Park Service,
Interior Department Building,

David H. Finley,
Chairman.

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C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
2000 Interior Department Building
Washington D. C.

September 24, 1952 year

Dear Mr. Thompson:

At their meeting on September 17, 1952, the Commission of Fine Arts considered a preliminary design of the Anacostia River Bridge, presented by Mr. Annese and Mr. Horne, of your Office, and accompanied by Mr. Harold J. Spelman, and Mr. Milton A. Fischer, of the Bureau of Public Roads, General Services Administration.

The Commission requests that a new study be prepared, embodying these points:

1. That no ashlar (or so-called rubble) facing wall be used;
2. That dimension granite, laid in courses, be used where protection against erosion or other damage by river water is necessary, presumably up to the high tide line. This applies to the sides as well as ends of the piers, also to the wing walls where they are exposed to erosion;
3. That all other surfaces of piers and wing walls be the normal surface of the cast concrete;
4. That the surfaces of the piers, above the granite, shall not receive any special treatment such as accenting the plywood joints of the forms;
5. That the vertical breaks in the wing walls be restricted to those points where expansion joints occur and that they be reduced to the minimum necessary for the satisfactory hiding of the joints;
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